



# OFFICIAL NEWS RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

301 North Lamar St., Suite 300, Jackson, MS 39201

[www.mfc.state.ms.us](http://www.mfc.state.ms.us)

---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bill Kitchings,  
Public Outreach Forester  
(601) 780-0492  
bkitchings@mfc.state.ms.us

*February 5, 2009*

### **Atkinson Hired as Law Enforcement Officer**

Jackson, MS—Ritchie Atkinson of Leake County was recently hired as a law enforcement officer with the Mississippi Forestry Commission. Atkinson brings eleven years of law enforcement experience to the Mississippi Forestry Commission. Law enforcement duties and authority of the commission's law enforcement officers are limited to woods arson.

After graduating from the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy, Atkinson served eight years with the Kosciusko Police Department as a patrolman, S.W.A.T. member, and National Rifle Association firearms instructor. He also served two years as a deputy with the Attala County Sheriff's Office and one year as a deputy with the Leake County Sheriff's Office.

Atkinson works under the direct supervision of the Forestry Commission's chief fire law investigator Scott Miles.

Ritchie and his wife Dawn live in Leake County with their two sons, Rusty and Gary.

Please report any suspicious behavior concerning a woods fire by calling the Mississippi Forestry Commission's Woods Arson Hotline at 1-800-240-5161. Information leading to the arrest and conviction of a woods arsonist can be rewarded up to \$2,500.

# # #